

Additional Activity: Go to the library to find colored pictures of these animals, insects and plants. Color this picture based on what you find.

Ready, Set...

GET WET!

WETLAND HIDE & SEEK

Wetlands are fascinating places. Think of a wetland as an area of land where the soil is so wet that the water can't drain for long periods of time. It's a perfect home for plants, animals, and insects that need a wet place to live or hunt. If you visit a wetland you will get to see some water-loving creatures. You can find wetland areas around lakes and ponds, along riverbanks, and near the coast of an ocean. Marshes, swamps, bogs, and prairie potholes are other names for wetlands. Some wetland animals are very small and others match the colors around them. Like in this picture.

How many creatures can you find hiding in this wetland?



Key



Beaver



Blue Crab



Frog



Mussel



Mosquito



Turtle



Salamander



Lily Pads



Carp



Dragonfly



Duck Weed



Blue Heron



Water Strider



Clams



Nutria



Marsh Grass



Duck



Cattails

HARMONY

A PARTNERSHIP WITH A HEALTHY LAND

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

PLANNING YOUR WETLAND VISIT

What to Wear:

- ◆ If you wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt the prickly plants and flying insects shouldn't bother you.
- ◆ On bright days, sunglasses will help you see into the water and a hat will give relief from the sun and bugs.
- ◆ Tall rubber boots will help keep your feet warm and dry. (You can also cover your shoes with thick plastic bags and cinch the tops with string or a loose rubber band.) Remember to tuck your pant legs inside!

What to Bring:

- ◆ Snacks and drinking water will help you enjoy the day.
- ◆ Take empty sacks or plastic containers for collecting plants and soil samples.
- ◆ Library books about insects, wildflowers,

- fish, birds, or wetland animals would help you identify what you're seeing. Just don't get them wet!
- ◆ You'll want a pencil and paper for your notes and sketches.

- ◆ A magnifying glass will give you a better look at tiny plants and insects.
- ◆ Binoculars and a camera would be fun to use, if you have them, but they're not necessary.

DON'T HANDLE BIRD EGGS OR ANIMAL BABIES.

This could harm the animal!

DON'T EAT ANY BERRIES OR PLANTS

unless an adult says it's okay. Some are poisonous.

What to Do:

- ◆ Have an adult take you to visit a wetland.
- ◆ Remember to stay on walkways or trails when you visit public places. You don't want to trample delicate plants or step on animal nests.
- ◆ Ask permission if you want to explore a pond or riverbank on someone's private property.
- ◆ Make sketches or take pictures of berries, plants, eggs, or animal babies.
- ◆ Close your eyes and listen to the sounds in the wetland. How many different sounds do you hear? Try to figure out what makes those sounds.
- ◆ Breathe deeply and notice the different smells of the wetland.
- ◆ Sit quietly in one place for awhile. You may see more activity when your movements don't frighten the animals away.
- ◆ Look for animal tracks, burrows, or other signs of animal activity.
- ◆ When you leave, take trash out with you, including any you find along the way.
- ◆ Fires and smoking are not allowed. Also, remind adults not to park their cars over tall grasses that could catch fire.

WHAT GROWS THERE?

Water in a wetland is very special because it is home for many tiny creatures. Try this experiment to see just what grows in a wetland near you!

YOU'LL NEED:

- a large plastic container with a lid
- two large jars made of clear glass
- a window with bright sunlight
- a magnifying glass

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

1. Collect water from a wetland area, like a pond or stream. (Water from a mud puddle will also work.) Be careful not to collect any mud or large plants with the water.
2. At home, pour the wetland water into one of the glass jars.
3. Pour clear water from a faucet into the other glass jar.
4. Place both jars near a bright window.
5. Look at both jars after a few days.

What happened?

The water you collected from the wetland has probably turned cloudy and green. Green colors indicate that algae (pronounced al-gee), are probably growing in your jar. Algae are green plants

that grow in fresh or salt water by using sunlight to make food. Although some algae can grow very large, yours is likely to be so small that you'll need to borrow a microscope to get a close look.

Do your algae move? Are they different sizes and shapes? Your jar of tap water won't have these tiny plants in it because they are filtered out so you won't drink them.

— Remember, when you're done with your experiment, return the wetland water to the wetland.

Here are
THIN
YO
CAN
TO H
prot
We
in y

MAKE A WETLAND!
TRY THIS!
MAKE A WETLAND!

Build your own wetland and see how it works!

YOU'LL NEED:

- a baking pan (13" x 9" aluminum works well)
- modeling clay
- a scrap of indoor/outdoor carpet **OR** florist's foam **OR** a sponge wide enough to cover the width of the pan
- a "sprinkler" type watering can
- a jar of muddy water

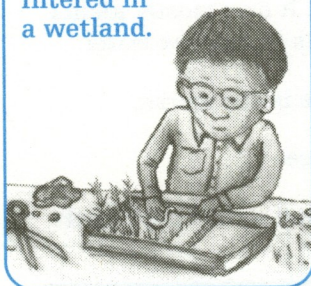


1. Spread a layer of modeling clay over half of the baking pan. This represents the land. The empty half of the pan represents a body of water, like a pond or a lake.
2. Shape the "land" so that it gradually slopes toward the middle of the pan, or into the "water," like the shore of a pond or lake.
3. Cut the carpeting (or florist's foam or sponge)

so that it completely fills the space along the edge of the clay. This represents the wetland area.

4. See what happens when you:
 - a. Pour water over the land (using a sprinkler to represent rain).
 - b. Pour the same amount of water over the land but remove the "wetland."
 - c. Pour muddy water over the land.

This activity will show you how water gets filtered in a wetland.

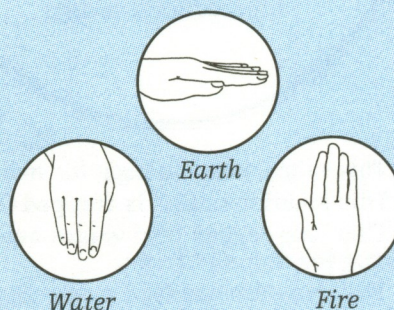


5. Complete your wetland model by adding animals made from left-over modeling clay. Try making trees and plants out of twigs and pine needles or toothpicks, cotton swabs, and a little paint.
6. Show and explain your wetland model to others.

TRADITIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN GAME

This game uses the hand signs of earth, water, and fire.

The signs are made this way:



All of the signs are made by one hand, with the arm outstretched and the hand held just above waist level.

Scoring:

Earth drinks the *Water*, and wins.
Water puts out the *Fire*, and wins.
Fire scorches the *Earth*, and wins.

Playing:

1. Players stand two paces apart facing each other, with right hands closed at waist level.
2. On the word "Go!" participants slowly bring their clenched fists from waist level up to shoulder level and show one of the three signs.
3. If players give the same sign, a tie is called and everyone makes a new sign.

some
INGS
OU
DO
ELP
ect
THE
etlands
our area!



1. Visit a wetland. Call your local conservation agency to find a wetland close to where you live. Get to know the area and learn about the plants and animals that live there. Observe how this wetland changes with the seasons.

2. Adopt a wetland. Get your whole class involved! If you're a member of a club like girl or boy scouts or 4-H, get your club members involved! By working together you can do a lot to protect a specific wetland in your area. Contact your local conservation agency to find a wetland that needs adopting. Take turns monitoring the wetland and picking up litter. Write articles for your local newspaper telling people about your wetland and its valuable functions. Organize tours to teach others about your wetland.

3. Learn more about the wetlands. The information in this activity guide is just an introduction to wetlands. To really understand the importance and fascination of wetlands, you'll need to keep learning about them. Go to your local library or conservation agency to find information which will help you understand the things you observe. These are also good places to learn about wetlands in other locations. Most importantly, share the information you find with friends and relatives.

Ready Set Get Wet was developed as a cooperative effort by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

For additional copies of Ready Set Get Wet or for a free brochure describing SWCS's cartoon booklets, contact:



Soil and Water Conservation Society
7515 N.E. Ankeny Road
Ankeny, IA 50021-9764
1-800-THE-SOIL
or 515-289-2331



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Person with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-7327 (voice) or (202) 690-1538 (TDD).

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C., 20250, or call (202) 720-7327 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

FOOD WEB DETECTIVE

Shown below is a food web from a freshwater marsh, but the animals are missing. Read the clues and see if you can figure out which creatures are being described. Then cut out that creature and glue it in the food web over the appropriate number.

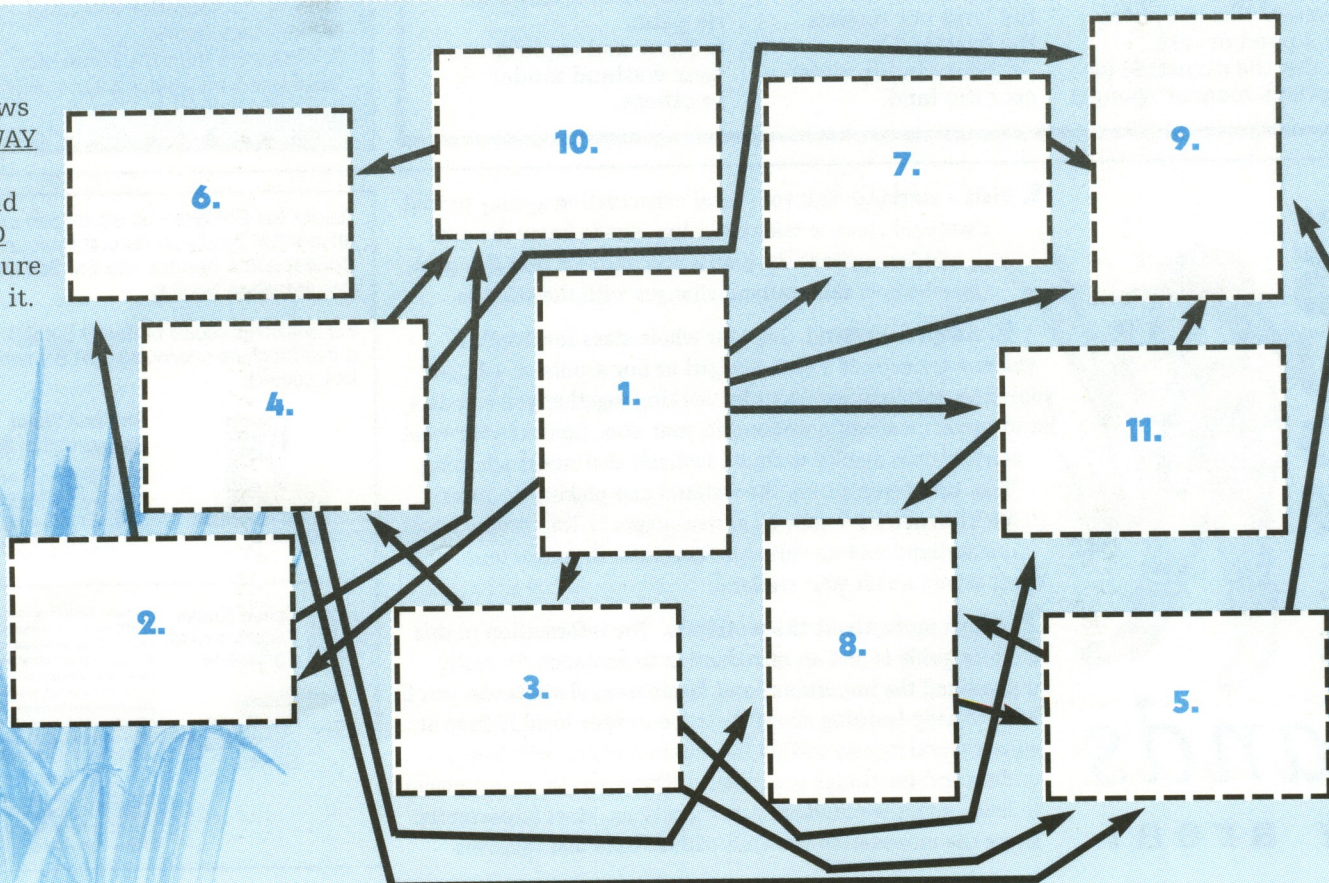
1. These living things use energy from the sun to make food.
2. This small marsh rodent eats plants and sometimes insects.
3. The larva of this flying insect feeds on plants.
4. This creature eats insects; it stays close to water, but it is sometimes found on land.
5. This animal lives all of its life in the water and feeds on insects and frogs.
6. This animal hunts at night for snakes and mice.
7. This small mammal is trapped for its fur. It eats mostly plants.
8. This long-legged bird wades among plants in shallow water, looking for fish and frogs.
9. This creature can find many things to use in the marsh, including plants, fish, frogs, and crayfish.
10. This long reptile hunts for frogs and mice.
11. This creature looks like a small lobster and swims backwards. It eats small fish, insect larvae, and plants.



When you're done, you should notice that you can't take one box away without affecting all the rest of the creatures in the web.

NOTE:

The arrows point AWAY from the "food" and TOWARD the creature that eats it.



Answers: 1. Plants 2. Mouse 3. Mayfly 4. Frog 5. Muskrat 6. Owl 7. Bass 8. Heron 9. Snake 10. Person 11. Crayfish